Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An optical recording medium, including a reflective layer and a recording layer, and constructed in a manner that a recording mark is formed on the recording layer by irradiating a laser beam so as to record information,

the recording layer being ~~continuously formed in a relative moving direction to the laser beam~~ formed with plural virtual recording cells, each of which has an arbitrary unit length and a unit width perpendicular to the unit ~~length in the relative moving direction,~~length,

~~in the case where the laser beam is irradiated to the virtual recording cell over the entire~~ the unit length of a virtual recording cell being associated with an allowable irradiation time T of a laser beam securable to ~~one~~ the virtual recording cell, ~~when~~ the laser beam having a reference power, which is preset so that an optical reflectance of the virtual recording cell is reduced more than 50% with respect to an initial reflectance, ~~being irradiated to~~ the optical reflectance of the virtual recording cell ~~do that an irradiation time~~ is modulated into five stages or more by the laser beam within the allowable irradiation time T, the virtual recording cell being formed with a recording mark which gives five stages or more different optical reflectance to the virtual recording ~~cell.~~cell,

wherein the virtual recording cell is capable of changing the optical reflectance, during a time period between 3/4 T and 4/4T of the allowable irradiation time T, less than 20% and more than 5% of the initial reflectance.

2-3. (Canceled).

4. (Previously Presented) The optical recording medium according to claim 1, wherein the recording layer contains an organic dye.

5-6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) An optical recording method, which irradiates an laser beam to an optical recording medium including a reflective layer and a recording layer, and forms a recording mark the recording layer so as to record information, comprising:

continuously forming a virtual recording cell, which has an arbitrary unit length and a unit width perpendicular to the unit length, on the recording layer in a relative moving direction to the laser beam;

presetting a reference power of the laser beam so that an optical reflectance of the virtual recording cell is reduced more than 50% with respect to an initial reflectance in the case where the laser beam is irradiated to the virtual recording cell over the entire allowable irradiation time T securable to one virtual recording cell;

irradiating the laser beam having the preset reference power to the virtual recording cell so that the irradiation time is modulated into five stages or more; and

forming a recording mark which gives five stages or more different optical reflectance to the virtual recording ~~cell.~~cell,

wherein in the case where the laser beam is irradiated to the virtual recording cell over the entire allowable irradiation time T, the reference power is preset so that a change of the optical reflectance during a portion between 3/4 T and 4/4T of the allowable irradiation time T elapsed is less than 20% and more than 5% of the initial reflectance.

8-9. (Canceled).

10. (Original) The optical recording method according to claim 7, wherein the recording layer contains an organic dye, and is applied in the case of recording information in the recording layer.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing a reflectance of an optical recording medium from a reference reflectance, comprising:

determining a reference power for irradiating a laser beam, the laser beam able to burn the recording medium to reduce the reflectance of the recording medium, the reference power corresponding to the reference reflectance, the reference power enabling the laser beam to reduce the reflectance of the recording medium more than 50% from the reference reflectance; and

irradiating the laser beam on the recording medium with an irradiating power, the irradiating power less than the reference power and varying based on information to be recorded on the recording medium in a time period during which a cell of the recording medium is irradiated, the laser beam able to reduce at least 5 %, but no more than 20 %, of the reflectance of the recording medium from the reference reflectance during a last quarter of the time period.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, the laser beam able to reduce the reflectance of the recording medium to five different levels in a fraction of ~~a~~ the time period during which the cell ~~may be~~ is irradiated.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, a size of the cell being smaller than a size of the laser beam.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~12~~11, the laser beam reducing the reflectance of the recording medium more than 50% from the reference reflectance during ~~the fraction of the time period being~~ a first 3/4 of the time period.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~12~~11, the laser beam reducing the reflectance of the recording medium more than 50% from the reference reflectance ~~the fraction of a time period being a portion~~ between 1/4 and 3/4 of the time period.

16-17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12,

the cell being one of a plurality of virtual recording cells,

the plurality of virtual recording cells arranged continuously along a direction in which the laser beam moves relative to the recording medium with neighboring virtual recording cells adjacent to each other.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18,

the plurality of virtual recording cells having a same predetermined length in the direction in which the laser beam moves relative to the recording medium.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, the time period being a time duration for the laser beam to pass a virtual recording cell.